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VII. THE ROCHESTER PUBLIC MARKET

BY W. W. MERRILL,
Market Master, Rochester, N. Y.

The Rochester Public Market is both wholesale and retail, but nearly all sales whether to consumers or otherwise are in wholesale quantities. Perishable goods are sold daily, but most of the trading is done on the three market days, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Stalls are rented at \$40 a year, and this carries with it the right to sell anywhere on the streets of the city. Stalls are rented also by the week for \$1.50, and by the day for 25 cents, but at present this gives no license to sell away from the market. State regulations as to adulteration, misbranding, weights, measures, food deterioration, sanitary conditions, etc., govern the market and there are policemen and city sealers constantly in attendance to enforce them.

About as many hucksters rent stalls by the year as farmers, but on market days there are always many more of the latter, who take their stalls by the day or week. In all there is room for 1,200 wagons. Farmers and hucksters are allotted space in distinct sections of the market. This is in accordance with the farmer's wishes and encourages him to come here. As a rule he can dispose of his produce more advantageously in the market than outside, and needs no further inducement, but as has been said, he is not permitted to sell outside unless he rents his stall by the year. This, of course, prevents much direct marketing off the market.

All officials and employees are under civil service rules. The former consist of the market master and his assistant. No publications are issued, but reports of conditions and prices appear in all the newspapers daily. Prices are influenced to some extent by the prices in other markets, especially New York, but are determined mostly by local conditions and the law of supply and demand.

There is nothing peculiar about the working of producer's and consumer's prices here. The former tries to get as much as he can, and the latter to pay as little. On the whole the former has benefited by the market, and it is probably true that, without the facilities afforded by the market for sale and distribution, the consumer would be paying considerably more. All our foodstuffs are of high quality.

There is too much competition for it to be otherwise. Practically everything brought in is perishable and must be sold quickly. The market has induced many in the immediate vicinity to turn their land to raising produce, but the percentage of increase in the output is not large, for this entire section is largely devoted to gardening and has been for over fifty years. No particular adaptation of produce to the city's needs was necessary, for every kind of vegetable and fruit suited to this climate is raised within ten miles of us.

Because the market is partly wholesale, business must be done too early in the morning for the patronage of the average housewife. Those living in the vicinity, however, come here regularly, and others come whenever their purchases are to be large enough to make their saving material. In a city of this size it is impossible to have the market immediately accessible for everybody, but the situation has been met as best it can be, with the result that our attendance is several thousand daily.